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SUBJECT: UNAMI BRIEFS A/S FELTMAN ON IRAQ ELECTIONS, DIBS,
REGIONAL RE-INTEGRATION, CAMP ASHRAF

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gary A. Grappo for reason
s 1.4(b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY. Substantive discussion of Iraq's elections dominated NEA A/S Feltman's December 14 meeting with Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Ad Melkert, including UNAMI's current assessments of out of country voting, election observers, security, and the complaints process. SRSG Melkert also emphasized to A/S Feltman his interest in establishing broader political agreement on the disputed areas beyond the efforts in the ongoing High Level Task Force. Regarding Iraqi future re-integration into the region, SRSG Melkert offered his candid assessment that bilateral, not multilateral, engagements were more realistic for Iraq. On the planned initial step in voluntary relocation of members of the Muhajideen e-Haq (MEK) at Camp Ashraf on December 15, SRSG Melkert told A/S Feltman that UNAMI anticipated an uneventful day, but considerable media attention. END SUMMARY.

Elections

[12](#). (C) A/S Feltman congratulated SRSG Melkert on his work on getting the final election law passed December 6, and in turn Melkert complimented Washington's timely engagement on the law, especially with the Kurds. On Out of Country Voting (OCV), the SRSG predicted to A/S Feltman that UNAMI would be asked to play a larger role in helping Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) administer OCV, particularly because OCV became politicized when Vice President Hashimi vetoed the amended election law in November. Melkert conveyed concerns relayed to him by Sandra Mitchell, head of the UNAMI Electoral Assistance Team, that the USAID-funded IFES team had not yet approved a request by IHEC to provide additional support for OCV in 23 countries. Melkert emphasized to A/S Feltman that IHEC needs to demonstrate a credible OCV effort, and that all eligible voters will be able to participate.

[13](#). (C) The SRSG confirmed to A/S Feltman that IHEC was still planning to conduct OCV up to 23 countries. Both agreed that the recent decision to allow out of country voters to cast ballots for a specific province, rather than national compensatory seats, created new challenges for OCV administration. Melkert noted that voters may have difficulty providing evidence of their link to a specific province. UNAMI Political Officer Marwan Ali expressed concerns that many Iraqis possessed incomplete or insufficient personal documents, especially older Iraqi birth certificates, that could make it impossible to determine actual provinces of residency of many out of country voters. Ali also suggested that some political parties from Iraq may be active in organizing out of country voters in Syria; he specifically mentioned that groups loyal to Saleh Mutlaq, Ayad Allawi and Tariq al-Hashimi might be the most organized groups.

[14](#). (C) Acting Deputy SRSG Birgitta Alani reported that UNAMI

will field fourteen observer teams for the March elections. However, Melkert noted, domestic observers will provide much more coverage than UNAMI and international groups; UNAMI estimates that roughly 200,000 observers from political entities and non-governmental organizations will monitor the polls on election day. On security, Melkert commented that the election-day environment in 2010 will be markedly different from the January 2009 provincial elections, but overall UNAMI does not expect spoilers on election day. POL M/C added that security planning seemed better this year, in QM/C added that security planning seemed better this year, in part due to the Election Supreme Security Committee (ESSC) headed by LTG Ayden Khalid Qadir of the Ministry of the Interior and directly assisted by UNAMI and MNF-I. SRSRG Melkert expressed appreciation for a review of IHEC's physical security that the UNAMI Elections Assistance Team directly requested from MNF-I; he said that MNF-I had already prepared a valuable assessment of vulnerabilities at IHEC, which UNAMI will use in briefings with IHEC security personnel.

17. (C) UNAMI is advising IHEC to prepare to process an estimated 3,000 - 4,000 complaints after the election on March 7, Victoria Stewart-Jolley, special assistant to the SRSRG, reported to A/S Feltman. Stewart-Jolley noted that the complaints division at IHEC has gained experience and built capacity during its work on the 2009 provincial elections and the 2009 Kurdistan Region elections. She predicted to the Assistant Secretary that the division's 70 people would capably process election complaints on time, including any complaints on out of country voting. Stewart-Jolley estimated that IHEC would be able to announce preliminary election results (roughly 70% of the total results) about

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four days after the election. After the final results are announced (approximately 30-45 days after the election), according to Stewart-Jolley, under the constitution the Supreme Court is required to ratify the final election results.

Disputed Internal Boundaries

18. (C) The High Level Task Force (HLTF), charged with addressing matters in the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) areas, continues to meet regularly, reported UNAMI political officer Adam Hinds. Hinds told A/S Feltman that the HLTF is currently working on some property issues in Kirkuk; A/S Feltman emphasized that it was important to keep the HLTF process going. SRSRG Melkert concurred, but added that the HLTF is an important mechanism for operational procedures on the ground, not forward momentum on DIBs issues. Melkert explained that immediately following the elections, he would advocate for a meeting of senior level leaders to define an agenda for political agreement geared toward long-term stability in the DIBs areas. Melkert told A/S Feltman that he is now assessing the viability of this approach with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and others. He said that, while no one is yet committed to the idea, all have expressed interest. Melkert suggested that Vice President Biden might consider a role in this process, and that he might help to get all of the sides to engage. When A/S Feltman asked if Melkert thought Iraq leaders would commit to such a process before the elections, Melkert replied that while Iraqi leaders might not meet, they could agree in principle to the process. The SRSRG questioned how government formation could take place without commitment to some sort of process to address the DIBs; he added that the KRG Representative to the HLTF, Rowsch Shaways, advised that the post-election period might be the best time to seek political agreement on the DIBs areas.

Regional Re-Integration

¶9. (C) A/S Feltman conveyed his impressions of the recent meetings at and on the margins of the Manama Dialogue, including a scratchy set of exchanges between Iraqi PM Advisor Sadiq al-Rikabi and FM's from neighboring countries. Melkert confirmed to the Assistant Secretary that he planned to travel to Kuwait in mid-January, finally making the trip after it was delayed twice in the fall. Melkert believes that UNAMI can play an important role for the international community in helping to see that Iraq's Chapter VII status eventually ended in a responsible manner. Both agreed that it will not be easy, especially as Rikabi and PM Maliki continue to demonstrate truculence when Kuwait is discussed.

¶10. (C) Regarding suggestions for future regional architecture that would better integrate Iraq, SRSG Melkert offered his candid assessment that bilateral, not multilateral, engagements were more realistic for Iraq. He noted that even Iraq's bilateral relations with Iran and Turkey, not to mention Syria, continue to be very difficult. Mohammed Najjar concurred, emphasizing that PM Maliki favors only bilateral relationships. Melkert informed the Assistant Secretary that UNAMI is about to open its long-awaited regional office in Tehran this month in support of the bilateral agenda between Iraq and Iran. Melkert cautioned that it will be a small mission with limited expectations, with water issues as an immediate focus. The Tehran office will be headed by former UNAMI SRSG Special Assistant Elpida Rouka.

Camp Ashraf

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¶11. (C) On GOI's planned solicitation of volunteers of members of the Muhajideen e-Haq (MEK) at Camp Ashraf for relocation on December 15, SRSG Melkert told A/S Feltman that UNAMI anticipated a calm day. After the SRSG spoke to the Iraqi military commander for Camp Ashraf on December 13, he was convinced that the ISF would seek to resist possible provocation by the MEK. Melkert expressed overall concern that the GOI was placing pressure on itself by initiating the process of MEK relocation before it defined its final objectives. Melkert encouraged continued efforts by UNAMI and the international community to seek additional opportunities to engage with MEK members and to identify options that would enable members to leave the camp if they wished. A/S Feltman agreed with UNAMI that the December 15 events at Camp Ashraf would likely generate media interest, but little to address ongoing challenges with the MEK.

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